



Grace Messenger

"Let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe" (Hebrews 10:28).



NURSERY SCHEDULE

May

- 03 Kristy Hines & Jenny Lovassy
- 10 Joshua & Lori Hewlett
- 17 Jon & Tanya Amis
- 24 David & Mary Alice Olive
- 31 Nellie & Hannah McFadden

June

- 07 Kevin & Sara Smith
- 14 Linda Olive & Somja Williams
- 21 Vicki Johnson & Amber Solan
- 28 Bob & Faye Williams

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF

MAY 1, 2009

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$ 40,492.33
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 37,876.24
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 0.00
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 33,849.72
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 1,622.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$ 34,049.72
April Love offerings	\$ 1,422.00
April General Fund offerings	\$ 13,064.70
Building Fund balance	\$ 62,564.95
Missions Fund balance	\$ 9,026.00
General Fund balance	\$ 62,026.81



**Missionary
Trevor Johnson**

Will be speaking at the Mid-Week Service
Wednesday, June 3
7 PM

This is the Johnson's first furlough after laboring in Indonesia for three years. We have supported him and prayed for him during this time. The Lord has done many great things through this servant of the Lord. Be sure to attend and hear firsthand of the good work that the Lord has accomplished.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

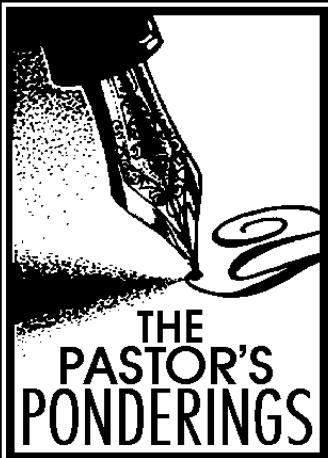
Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Evening Worship	6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting	7:00 PM
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FIRST SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Dinner at the Church	12:00 Noon
Afternoon Service	1:30 PM
(No Evening Service)	



Take Heed What You Hear

Jesus placed a great deal of importance on hearing. He often said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Jesus wasn't speaking about physical hearing, but about hearing with spiritual discernment. Jesus also once told his disciples, "Take heed what you hear" (Mark 4:24). This

means that we are to pay attention to what we hear.

Jesus wants us to give careful attention to what we hear. In the context of Mark 4, Jesus was talking about a sower casting seed on the ground. Jesus said that the seed represents the word of God. The soil on which the seed is cast represents hearers. As hearers we are daily tuned to all kinds of voices and messages, but Jesus calls on us to take heed what we hear. What we need to hear is the word of God.

Why is it so important for us to hear God's word? There are two primary reasons.

First, it is important for us to hear the word of God because by it we are saved. Paul told the Romans, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Sinners are saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; that is the great message of Romans. But Paul also makes it clear how that message comes to us.

Faith comes as a result of hearing the gospel preached, of hearing what God's word says about the way of salvation. It is in hearing the gospel, the word of God, that the Holy Spirit produces faith in us. Faith depends on hearing the word of God and hearing it with understanding.

Since faith comes by hearing, it is vitally important that we hear the right message. It isn't any message which we hear that will bring salvation. The right message is the one contained in the Word of God. Spurgeon said, "Faith comes by the word of God reaching our minds, and our knowing and understanding it."

"Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live," says God's word (Isa. 55:3). Saving faith comes from hearing the word of God alone. Paul told the Ephesians that they trusted in Christ "after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1:13). It is from hearing the word of God that we are saved. That is why we must take heed what we hear.

Second, it is also important for us to hear the word of God

because by it we are sanctified. True believers love God's Word because it is through Scripture that they understand God's will and are brought into conformity with it. The person that wants to grow in love and obedience to Christ gladly hears the word of God.

How does God make us holy? How do we become more like Christ? The Holy Spirit takes the information in the Bible and brings us into compliance with it. In his great prayer that is recorded in John 17, Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth" (17:17).

The great instrument of our sanctification is "truth." The Bible is God's truth. It "has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter" (Baptist Faith and Message, par. 1). The Bible is God's word without error. It is infallible and inerrant. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). The word of God was written by holy men that "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

The purpose of God's word is to sanctify Christians. The basic meaning of the word sanctify is to set apart. God sets a person apart from what is common and sinful to that which is sacred and holy. The means by which God does this is through the word of God. There can be no sanctification apart from God's word.

The principle taught by Jesus is simple. The word of God's is the means by which we are first saved and then are progressively sanctified. That is why it is important for us to spend more time in the word. Salvation and sanctification is the fruit of God's truth, God's word. And nothing else can produce it.

So take heed what you hear. Don't look for salvation or sanctification in dreams, visions, impressions or ecstatic experiences. Don't look for it in conferences, asceticism, or forms and ceremonies. The word of God is the instrument by which the Holy Spirit saves and sanctifies.

How precious ought the Bible be to us!

Holy Bible, book divine;
Precious treasure, thou art mine;
Mine to tell me whence I came,
Mine to teach me what I am.

May God help us to do as Jesus said: "Take heed to what you hear." We will give an account someday of all that we have heard and how it has influenced us. Don't miss out on hearing and then applying the best book in all the world, the word of God.

WEB SITES

WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM PROJECT –
www.shortercatechism.com/

SPURGEON'S CATECHISM –
[www.grace.org.uk/faith/spurgeon.html/](http://www.grace.org.uk/faith/spurgeon.html)

BIBLE DICTIONARIES ONLINE –
[www.online-dictionary.net/bible/index.php/](http://www.online-dictionary.net/bible/index.php)

BOOKS ONLINE BY J. C. RYLE –
[www.biblebb.com/ryle.htm/](http://www.biblebb.com/ryle.htm)

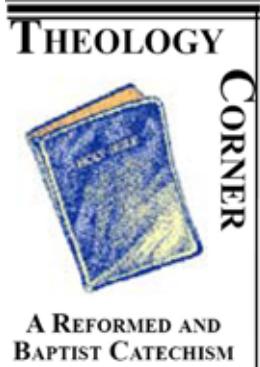
SERMONS BY PREACHERS IN THE UK –
www.graceandtruth.org.uk/index.htm/



THEOLOGY CORNER

QUESTION #109 – What doth the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

ANSWER – The conclusion of the Lord's prayer (which is, For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen) teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him. And, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.



SCRIPTURE – Daniel 9:18-19; 1 Chronicles 29:11-13; Revelation 22:20-21; 1 Corinthians 14:16.

COMMENT – When we pray these words we declare “our belief that the kingdoms of this world are the rightful property of our Father, that to him alone belongs all power, and that he alone deserves all glory” (Ryle). We say that unto our heavenly Father “belongs the kingdom and sovereign government of all things, with right and strength to dispose thereof for bringing to pass all that we request for, and to thee belongs the glory of all things forever” (Dickson).

ILLUSTRATION – John Janeway, when on his deathbed, was employed chiefly in praise. He said to his friends, “O, help me to praise God; I have now nothing else to do. I have done with prayer and all other ordinances. Before a few hours are over, I shall be in eternity, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. I shall presently stand upon Mount Zion, with an innumerable company of angels and spirits of just men made perfect, and with Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. I shall hear the voice of much people, and with them shall cry, ‘Hallelujah, glory, salvation, honour and power unto the Lord our God.’ And again we shall say, ‘Hallelujah!’” In this triumphant manner he expired in the twenty-second year of his age.



MAY 15 - The Ladies of Grace will meet at the church from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. for spring housecleaning chores and sprucing up the church. If you have any questions, please see Faye Williams or Vicki Johnson.

MAY 16 - Kevin and Sara Smith have purchased a new home for their family. Let's celebrate with a house warming on May 16th from 2 - 4 PM at their new home, located at 15424 Mill Valley Drive, Athens, Alabama.

MAY 18-20 - The annual FIRE conference will meet at First Baptist Church, Carmel, Indiana, just outside Indianapolis. Pray for your elders as both will be attending the meeting (dv).

MAY 31 - Mike McFadden will begin a new series of Sunday School lessons for the adult class on the Conscience.

JUNE 3 - Missionary Trevor Johnson will be giving an update on his work in Indonesia at the weekly prayer meeting.

JULY 19 - Missionary to Mexico, Danny Roten, will be preaching on the Lord's Day and telling us about his work in the Sunday School hour.

AUGUST 16 - Our missionary to France, David Vaughn, will be home on a brief furlough and will be at GBC preaching God's word and bringing us up to date on his work.

SEPTEMBER 20-22 - We are hosting a regional FIRE conference at our church. The main speaker is David Ellis, from Hinckley, England. Jerry Marcellino, Donny Martin, and John Crotts will be preaching also (dv).



Puritan Gems

A Difficult Work

Philip Henry

"Tis no easy matter to be saved. Twas difficult work to Jesus Christ to work redemption for us. Tis difficult work to the Spirit to work grace in us, and to carry it on against corruptions, temptations, distractions."

WHAT IS THE CHIEF END OF GOD?

James M. Renihan

While watching television the other evening, I came across what I can only call a Christmas Spectacular presented by a well-known evangelical megachurch in San Diego. It was a very impressive production indeed. At the center of the platform was a "Living Christmas Tree," that is, a set of choir risers made to resemble the shape of a fir tree, staffed on eight or nine levels by singers in altar-boy type robes. In front of this massive structure two highly skilled singers, a man and a woman, performed several powerful numbers, often accompanied by a dance troupe of men and women, or at times a children's choir. The production values were excellent, both in terms of the staging, the talent, and the television presentation-Hollywood or Las Vegas could not have done better.

The finale was especially impressive. A swinging rendition of the Hallelujah Chorus was presented by the assembled company. A choir processed up the aisles, while the dancers...surrounded the Christmas Tree. The two lead singers took center stage in the midst of the dancers, and everyone was swinging and swaying to the jazzy beat. The choir and dancers sang the various parts of the (upbeat) Hallelujah Chorus while the soloists improvised several inspirational slogans, inserting them into the rendition at diverse places. As the song reached its climax, balloons were released from the ceiling over the heads of the audience, and fireworks exploded from the stage. A rousing good time was had by all of the participants.

I should mention that there was an attempt at a spoken message, just before the finale... He stated that the theme of the evening was this - "He [meaning God] did it all for you." All of the singing and dancing was simply a celebration of the fact

that Christmas was a demonstration of God's great purpose, namely, that men and women, boys and girls, might have a good and enjoyable life here and forever...

This was followed by an interesting evangelistic tactic. The gentlemen told the audience that he was going to pray, and he wanted all of them to pray along with him audibly. He instructed the people that he would utter a phrase, and he wanted all of them to follow along, verbally repeating each of his phrases. After everyone was instructed to bow their heads and close their eyes, he led them in a typical prayer not unlike this: "Dear Jesus, thank you for your love for me. I realize now that I need you. Come into my life and save me. In Jesus Name, Amen." As he concluded, the lights went out and in a moment the finale began. It was breathtaking.

But as I viewed this spectacular, I was grieved in my heart. The longer that I watched, the more that I realized that this production was exactly the opposite of everything that I understand the Gospel of the Scriptures to be... I realized that if the speaker had written the Shorter Catechism, the first question would have been phrased like this: "Q.: What is the chief end of God? A.: God's chief end is to glorify you and to enjoy you forever."

In an engaging style, this man had indicated that the Gospel was ultimately man-centered. It is not that God is an offended and wrathful Deity who requires propitiation as a result of humanity's blasphemies, but rather that He exists waiting expectantly for us so that He can satisfy our needs in this life... How could anyone be offended at such a message?

I was reminded of Paul's words about the foolishness of preaching. From a human perspective, there is no doubt that the approach used in this performance must have an enormous popular appeal. People are willing to attend these productions. They are comfortable.

They are tremendously entertaining. And they require nothing of the audience beyond observation. All that one must do is sit back and enjoy the sumptuous blend of color, motion and sound. But what do they have to do with preaching the Gospel? Is this evangelism as we find it in the Bible?

I have sometimes walked away from the pulpit after preaching knowing exactly what Paul was describing when he called preaching "foolishness." I have wondered why God would choose such a method, especially in a culture that seemingly cannot concentrate on any subject for more than five minutes. Yet that is what He has done, and that is the method we must pursue. It is the bold declaration of the Word of God, the offensive Cross of Christ, the thunderings of the Law of God, the balm of the Gospel by appointed men that God has promised to bless. It is not the stage but the pulpit that must be at the center of our evangelism.

There is a double problem in productions like these: message and method. Clearly, the message presented was not the Gospel of Jesus Christ... Paul's method has no popular appeal. At times it landed him in jail, or on the wrong end of a whip, or under a pile of stones. But it was, and is, the power of God for salvation. We must not abandon it for the whims of popular culture.

It was good for me to watch this show. It deepened my commitment to do God's work in God's way-preaching the Gospel. I prefer the Shorter Catechism as it is: We exist for God's glory and not vice versa.

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